

Message Text

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ACTION OFA-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-10 AGR-10 AID-05 CEA-01

CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-02 COME-00 DLOS-04 DOTE-00

EB-07 EPA-04 ERDA-07 FEAE-00 FMC-02 TRSE-00 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 IO-11 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

NSF-02 OES-05 OMB-01 PA-02 PM-04 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 SAL-01 /148 W

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P R 211550Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5980

INFO COMICEDEFOR

CINCLANT

CNO WASHDC

SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 0104

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS PFOR UK IC

SUBJECT: ICELAND-UK FISHERIES DISPUTE: FIRST REACTION TO WITHDRAWAL
OF FRIGATES

1. SUMMARY: GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND NEWSPAPERS ARE CLAIMING MAJOR
ACCOMPLISHMENT TODAY IN WAKE OF UK DECISION TO PULL WARSHIPS OUT
OF 200-MILE ZONE. HOWEVER, INITIAL COMMENT REVEALS MARKED
DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN COALITION PARTIES OVER HOW MUCH
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CREDIT SHOULD GO TO NATO AND SYG LUNS FOR THEIR ROLES. NEARLY

ALL REACTION TO BRITISH MOVE EMPHASIZES THAT, IN SPITE OF WITHDRAWAL OF FRIGATES, COD WAR IS FAR FROM SETTLED. END SUMMARY.

2. RECEIPT WAS CONFIRMED PUBLICLY LAST NIGHT OF MESSAGE TO GOI FROM HAROLD WILSON CONVEYING HMG'S DECISION TO WITHDRAW WARSHIPS BEYOND 200-MILE LIMIT AND INVITING PRIME MIN HALLGRIMSSON TO LONDON FOR TALKS LATER THIS MONTH. CABINET MET THIS MORNING TO DISCUSS UK MOVE, AND ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE WILL CONSIDER IT TOMORROW. PRIME MINISTER HAS NOT COMMENTED SINCE OFFICIAL WORD RECEIVED FROM WILSON. EARLIER, HE HAD TOLD PRESS THAT, BASED ON UNOFFICIAL REPORTS OF UK DECISION, THERE NOW APPEARED TO BE NO BASIS FOR PROCEEDING WITH BREAK IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. HE ADDED THAT ICELANDIC LAW WOULD CONTINUE TO BE UPHELD IN ICELAND'S CLAIMED FISHING JURISDICTION (MEANING GOI WILL NOT PROMISE TO DISCONTINUE HARRASSMENT OF UK TRAWLERS).

3. PROGRESSIVE PARTY CHAIRMAN AND JUSTICE MINISTER OLAFUR JOHANNESON IN INTERVIEW IN PRESS CLAIMED THAT UK DECISION WAS DIRECT RESULT OF GOI'S ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO BREAK DIPLOMATIC TIES IF FRIGATES WERE NOT REMOVED. ASKED IF UK ACTION WAS CONSEQUENCE OF LUNS' MISSION, JOHANNESON REPEATED HIS OPINION THAT BRITISH HAD RESPONDED TO GOI DECLARATION. ADDING THAT LUNS DOUBTLESS DID WHAT HE COULD TO CALM SITUATION, JOHANNESON SAID HE FOUND IT "QUITE UNNECESSARY" FOR SYG TO THANK UK FOR CEASING AGGRESSION AGAINST ONE OF ITS ALLIES. JOHANNESON SAID PRIMEMIN SHOULD ACCEPT WILSON'S INVITATION BUT POINTED OUT THAT ANY NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF RESTRICTED BARGAINING POSITION OF GOI. JOHANNESON, WHOSE MINISTRY INCLUDES COAST GUARD, ADDED THAT ICELANDIC LAW WOULD BE ENFORCED WITHIN 200 MILES AS BEFORE.

4. PEOPLES ALLIANCE PARLIAMENTARY LEADER LUDVIK JOSEFSSON SAID WITHDRAWAL OF WARSHIPS WAS, IN ITSELF, A VICTORY. HOWEVER, HE STRESSED THAT NEGOTIATION OF NEW FISHERIES AGREEMENT WAS OUT OF QUESTION, BOTH BECAUSE OF UK BEHAVIOR DURING CURRENT DISPUTE AND CONDITION OF FISH STOCKS. JOSEFSSON EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT PRIM MIN'S GOING TO LONDON COULD RESULT IN 65,000-TON QUOTA FOR BRITISH, OR EVEN WORSE.

5. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHAIRMAN BENEDIKT GRONDAL CLAIMED MORAL UNCLASSIFIED

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VICTORY FOR ICELAND. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT UNCERTAINTY PREVAILS BOTH AS TO WHAT WILL NOW HAPPEN ON FISHING GROUNDS AND REGARDING OUTCOME OF POSSIBLE MEETING IN LONDON. RECALLING THAT SDP HAD OPPOSED RECENT FISHING PACT WITH FRG, GRONDAL SAID HE DOUBTED PARTY'S POSITION WOULD BE DIFFERENT VIS-A-VIS UK, GIVEN CONDITION OF FISH STOCKS.

6. LIBERALS AND LEFTISTS CHAIRMAN MAGNUS TORFI OLAFSSON SAID UK

MOVE MEANT THERE COULD BE TALKS BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS, ALTHOUGH THIS DID NOT MEAN RESUMPTION OF FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS UNLESS UK SHOWED ENTIRELY DIFFERENT ATTITUDE THAN THAT PRESENTED BY ROY HATTERSLEY LAST FALL.

7. ON EDITORIAL SIDE, INDEPENDENCE PARTY'S MORGUNBLADID TODAY CLAIMED SUCCESS FOR POLICY OF GEIR HALLGRIMSSON GOVERNMENT. PAPER ADDED THAT EVENTS HAD CONFIRMED VALUE TO ICELAND OF NATO MEMBERSHIP AND SAID NATION OWES SPECIAL THANKS TO SYG LUNS. MORGUNBLADID WENT ON TO SAY THAT REMOVAL OF FRIGATES IS ONLY ONE STEP TOWARD GOAL OF CONTROL BY ICELAND OF 200-MILE FISHING ZONE. IF GOAL CAN BEST BE REACHED THROUGH NEGOTIATION, GOI WILL NEGOTIATE, BUT UK MUST REALIZE THAT ICELAND'S DEPENDENCE ON ENDANGERED FISH RESOURCES MEANS VERY LIMITED BRITISH QUOTA FOR ONLY BRIEF PERIOD.

8. TIMINN, DAILY OF COALITION PARTNER PROGRESSIVE PARTY, SAID NEW NEGOTIATIONS MUST START FROM SCRATCH AND SHOULD BE BASED ON LATEST FINDINGS OF ICELANDIC MARINE RESEARCHERS. SUCCESS OF ANY RENEWED TALKS, SAID TIMINN, WILL DEPEND ON WHETHER UK APPRECIATES STATE OF COD STOCKS AND ACKNOWLEDGES LEGITIMACY OF ICELAND'S CLAIMS ON THEM.

9. PEOPLES ALLIANCE DAILY THJODVILJINN EDITORIAL CONTAINED CAUSTIC ATTACK ON GOVERNMENT'S FISHERIES POLICY AND ON PRIME MIN PERSONALLY. WITHOUT ANY SUBSTANTIATION, PAPER ACCUSED HALLGRIMSSON OF REVOKING 200-MILE LIMIT, REWARDING BRITISH AGGRESSION, AND PUTTING FISHERIES POLICY INTO HANDS OF NATO. EDITORIAL WENT ON TO CALL PRIME MIN "ONE OF MOST INSINCERE AND DISHONEST" POLITICIANS EVER TO HOLD MINISTERIAL POST IN ICELAND. IT ADDED THAT NATION DOES NOT WANT TO NEGOTIATE WITH UK, AND THAT ICELANDERS MUST NOW "STAND AGAINST THEIR ARCH-ENEMIES: NATO AND SUBSERVIENT POLICY OF GOI."

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FISHERIES, DISPUTES, NAVAL SHIPS, MUTUAL FORCE WITHDRAWALS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976REYKJA00104
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760023-0136
From: REYKJAVIK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760135/aaaabeme.tel
Line Count: 155
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION OFA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 JUN 2004 by schwenja>; APPROVED <12 JAN 2005 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ICELAND-UK FISHERIES DISPUTE: FIRST REACTION TO WITHDRAWAL OF FRIGATES
TAGS: EFIS, PFOR, UK, IC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006